



Congresswoman
Gloria Negrete McLeod

2014
Woman of the Year

March 21, 2014

Each March, during Women's History month, we celebrate remarkable women whose contributions improve the lives of so many Californians. The tradition began in the State Capitol in 1987 and continues here, in the Inland Empire, today. It is a privilege to welcome all the women who are being honored.

Each woman honored today has contributed to her community in significant ways and has been chosen based on her continued service. It is with a sense of respect and celebration that we set aside today to recognize and pay tribute to these amazing women.

I praise the service you provide in our community and encourage you to continue your dedication, hard work and advocacy for the residents of the 35th Congressional District!

Respectfully,

Congresswoman Gloria Negrete McLeod

Proudly representing the communities of Bloomington, Chino, Fontana, Montclair, Ontario, Pomona and Rialto in California's 35th Congressional District.



Mary Helen Cox

Bloomington



Mrs. Cox is a member of the Colton Christian Church where she helps feed the hungry.

Her passion for helping others has also encouraged her to volunteer at the Loma Linda Veterans Hospital by collecting toiletries, books and articles that are useful to Veterans. Mary Helen has been a member of the Bloomington Women's Club and the Bloomington Boosters Club for ten years where she volunteers with anything she can.

She married Gerald Cox, has two sons Jerry Rae and James R., daughter-in-law Jackie, five grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, and five great-great-grandchildren. She is her family's hero!

Debbie Sommers

Chino



Debbie was a police dispatcher for 15 years for the Pomona Police Department and Los Angeles Police Department. Four years ago, she joined the Chino Police Department Community Support Team. She has volunteered over 2000 hours and assisted in various assignments.

Mrs. Sommers is part of Soldiers' Angels, a nonprofit organization that assists deployed military personnel.

Her volunteer service at Cortez Elementary for seven years resulted in her current job as a librarian for the last 14 years. Debbie has spent hundreds of extra hours this past year changing over all the library books to a new reading program.

Debbie married Jack Sommers, has one daughter, Christina, one stepson, John, two stepdaughters, Shannon and Sara, and ten grandchildren.

Melba Buenafe Rey

Fontana



Melba works as a Small Business Banker servicing the entire Inland Empire region. She participates in various fundraising, networking, charitable and outreach activities in the community.

She serves on the Board of Directors of the Fontana Exchange Club having served as its Scholarship Chairperson for over ten years.

Melba is the Chairperson of the Filipino Community at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Fontana which carries out the goals and objectives of the Filipino Ministry of the Diocese of San Bernardino. At St. Joseph, she serves on the Pastoral Council, Finance Council, Hospitality, Music and Eucharistic ministries.

Melba is married to Marne Rey and they have two children Marco and Miel. Her life is blessed with two beautiful grandchildren; Isabelle Marie and Gabriel Alexander.

Tenice Johnson

Montclair



Tenice currently serves as the Operations Manager for Magan Medical Clinic. She is the current Chair of the Montclair Planning Commission, where she ensures that new development is consistent with the Montclair General Plan. She is part of the Community Disaster Plan helping to ensure that everyone is accounted for during a disaster.

Mrs. Johnson served on the Neighborhood Partnership of Montclair Board of Directors, where she addressed the housing needs of low and moderate income residents as well as seniors. She has also invested time supporting our youth as a Team Mom for the Montclair Golden Girls, Montclair Warriors All American Cheer Squad and Montclair Youth Basketball.

Tenice moved to Montclair in September 1991 with her husband Warren, daughter Elizabeth and son Warren Jr.

Cynthia Prendiz

Ontario



Cynthia Prendiz is currently the Program Director for Kids Come First Community Health Center. She has been with the organization for over 11 years and has held various positions.

Her creativity and resourcefulness have helped the program leverage scarce resources through partnerships with many other local agencies. Prior to working at the clinic she worked for Bienvenidos Foster Family Agency where she was also able to give back to the community through various activities for the children in foster care.

Cynthia is continuing her education by pursuing a bachelor's degree in Business Management to incorporate her work into the nonprofit sector.

An important aspect of her life is family -- her husband Scott, and three children, Alyssa, Anthony and Alexander (The A-Team).

M. Joyce Bakersmith

Pomona



M. Joyce is the Event Coordinator and Secretary of the Willie White Park Focus Group (WWPFG), Organizer for Willie White Park Neighborhood Watch, President of Pomona Breakfast Club for more than three years, past Lt. Governor for the Optimist Pacific South East District, Developer and Event Coordinator of the Pomona Cultural Festival and the WWPFG Juneteenth Celebration.

Mrs. Bakersmith was a foot soldier for former Council Member Willie White. Together they worked tirelessly to involve neighbors in community activities. These included public safety, property maintenance and children's activities.

She serves as a caregiver to both of her elderly parents, takes care of herself while constantly reaching out to help others in need.

She is married to Vernon Price, has two step-children, Michael Scott Price (killed in Iraq 2004) and Keith Alan and one step-grandchild, Amanda.

Linda Chapman

Rialto



Mrs. Chapman retired from the Federal Government and the Retail Industry after 34 years of employment.

After her retirement, she became active in community relations with the City of Rialto. Linda served as the Neighborhood Block Captain and Coordinator, Relay for Life Team Captain “Nightingales” for six years, is a member of Rialto Unified School District Measure Y Bond School Oversight Committee, 2011 Centennial Committee, Hometown Hero 2005, Human Relations Commissioner and Chair Person for Measure W 2013.

She volunteers her time to ensure the city remains a viable and sustainable community for our families, children, grandchildren and friends. She encourages others about the importance of community service and participation in the work of community service.

Linda has lived in Rialto for 41 years with her husband Kenney. She has two daughters, two son-in-laws and four grandchildren.

Congratulations to the 2014 Woman of the Year Honorees

Bloomington ... Mary Helen Cox

Chino ... Debbie Sommers

Fontana ... Melba Buenafe Rey

Montclair ... Tenice Johnson

Ontario ... Cynthia Prendiz

Pomona ... M. Joyce Bakersmith

Rialto ... Linda Chapman



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